

Grant Funds NU-ETHS History Workshops

By Jennifer Falcone - Daily Northwestern

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Nearly \$1 million award to create professional development program for middle, high school teachers

EVANSTON - This summer, as Evanston Township High School students relax, several of their U.S. history teachers will be busy working with Northwestern professors to enhance curriculum.

ETHS will receive almost \$1 million from a Teaching American History grant issued Sept. 22 by the U.S. Department of Education. District 202, which oversees the ETHS and is one of two Illinois school districts to receive the federal grant, will use the money to fund a three-year professional development program for middle school and high school history teachers from Evanston and the Chicago area.

NU history profs. Lane Fenrich and Nancy MacLean have committed to working on the project, which provides three years of summer training institutes for history teachers beginning next year. The project also will allow high school teachers to collaborate with NU professors in

classroom observation and workshops through the year-long Historians in Residence program.

Fenrich said the Historians in Residence program would meet six times during the academic year, and NU professors would lead discussions about key historical documents and cutting-edge issues with the teachers.

"The idea is to build ongoing, collaborative relationships between high school history teachers and college faculty so that individuals have numerous opportunities to ask questions, share strategies, and just talk history," Fenrich wrote in an e-mail to The Daily. "Our hope is that those relationships will outlive the grant itself and that NU's history department will continue to be involved in the Evanston educational system."

As part of the program, NU history and School of Education and Social Policy professors will serve as resources for the teachers' training.

The project will be fully funded by the more than \$960,000 federal grant, which U.S. Rep Jan Schakowsky, D-Illinois, worked to obtain.

"(Rep. Schakowsky) will continue to work with ETHS to secure other federal resources to help build on an already impressive program," Schakowsky spokesman Nadeam Elshami said. "The school deserves it."

This year the federal Department of Education allocated \$98.5 million in Teaching American History grants. The awards will be designed to assist middle schools and high schools in implementing research-based methods for improving the quality of instruction and professional development for teachers in U.S. history.

Although the Evanston project works to improve U.S. history students' performances as a whole, it is geared especially towards minority students. Many of the school districts involved in the ETHS-sponsored project are part of the Minority Student Achievement Network. The network, founded by ETHS Superintendent Allan Alson, is a national organization of diverse school districts working to minimize achievement differences between races.

ETHS history teacher and project director Charles Brady said the grants are important because many students lack U.S. history skills.

"The program is predicated on the belief that an informed citizenry is the foundation of our democracy," Brady said in an Oct. 22 ETHS press release. "Yet students in the United States are increasingly less well-informed about their nation's history."